

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What type of information does the Building Department have about my home? The Building Department generally has a file on most homes built in Granby. These files may include plot plans or surveys of the property, building permits and records of inspections, and correspondence related to the property. In some cases the files may also contain well and septic information and copies of building plans. The Building Department was established in the early 1960's. Records on homes built prior to that date generally are not available. Well and septic information on homes built since 1976 is available from the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD.ORG). Please be advised that the Building Department is not required to keep most building plans and periodically will dispose of the plans as permitted by state law.

Can the Building Department staff research my property file? We encourage anyone who is interested in a specific property to come into the office to review their own file. We may not know exactly what you are looking for and may miss something that you are interested in or would like a copy of. All records in the Building Department are public records and are available for anyone to view. The staff can make copies of any records at a nominal cost. Large files or maps may take extra time to copy so plan accordingly. If you have specific information or questions about your property you may wish to call ahead to make an appointment to speak to the appropriate staff member.

What type of projects do I need a building permit for? Building permits are required for most significant construction or renovation projects around the home. They are not required for things that would be considered ordinary repairs or maintenance. For example, replacing the roof on the house would require a building permit, while replacing a small area of damaged or defective shingles may not. Having proper permits in place and inspections of the work performed provides assurance in the future that work was done in a safe and legal manner. This also provides a valuable record of the building's history for future owners. If you have questions regarding a specific project you may be planning contact the Building Department early in the planning process to find out if you need a permit.

What information do I need to obtain a building permit? You will need to provide an adequate description of the project proposed and some type of drawing or construction plan. Plans may be drawn by a homeowner or contractor and do not have to be prepared by an architect or design professional in most cases. In general, the more complex the project is, the more detailed the plans will need to be. You will need to provide an estimated cost for the project. If a contractor will be performing the work a copy of the appropriate license will need to be included. If a contractor will have any employees on the property they will need to provide an insurance certificate showing evidence of Workers Compensation insurance. In most cases, if the information provided by an applicant is complete, a building permit will be issued within a few days at most. The Building Official is allowed up to 30 days under State Statute to review and either approve or deny a building permit.

Who should apply for the building permit? It is the legal responsibility of the property owner to obtain the required building permits for his property or to designate a contractor to act on his behalf to obtain them. Some contractors may specify this in a contract with the property owner, but it does not relieve the owner of this requirement. If you have any questions whether the proper permits have been obtained for a specific project please feel free to contact the Building Department.

How long is a building permit good for? Work to be performed under a building permit must be started within 180 days of the permit's issuance. If work to be performed is suspended or abandoned for more than 180 days the permit becomes null and void. The permit holder may request in writing for extensions of time, and the Building Official may grant extensions of up to 180 days each.

Where can I obtain copies of the Building Code? The Connecticut State Building Code is made up of a number of volumes covering many types of construction. It is available from viewing at the Building Department. If you would like to review the Code please call ahead to set up an appointment with the Building Official. This will save you time and help you find the information you are looking for more easily. Several volumes of the Code are also available in the Reference section of the Granby Public Library. Information on how to obtain copies of the Building Code is also available from the Office of the State Building Inspector. The State Building Inspector is part of the Department of Administrative Services, Division of Construction Services. The Building Department also has several helpful handouts pertaining to common construction projects.

Do I need a permit to construct a fence on my property? Permits are not required for fences, however there are several rules that apply to the location of fences. Fences constructed within 10 feet of the property lines must have the finished side ("good side") facing the property line. Fences over 10 feet in height must meet all front side, and rear yard setbacks for the zone that they are in. The Building Department strongly encourages residents and contractors to obtain a copy of their plot plan or survey to determine where boundary lines are prior to installation. In many cases this will be available from the Building Department. It is also helpful, but not a requirement, to set the fence back away from the property line to allow for future maintenance. Installers should also contact Call Before You Dig (800-922-4455) to determine if there are any underground utilities present in the area where the fence is proposed.

Where can I store a boat or recreational vehicle on my property? Recreational vehicles, campers, boat trailers and similar vehicles may be stored in the rear yard and at least 10 feet from all property lines. They must be owned or leased by the owner of the property that they are stored upon. A maximum of two such vehicles are allowed on a residential lot.

Can I store or park commercial vehicles on a residential lot? A maximum of two commercial vehicles may be parked or stored on a residential lot, provided that each does not have a capacity of more than 1 ½ tons and is owned or leased by the owner of the

property. They may be stored in a garage, barn, or in the rear yard at least 10 feet from all property lines.

Does the town have any regulations regarding unregistered or inoperable vehicles being parked on a residential property? The Town of Granby does have an ordinance relating to the parking or storage of unregistered or inoperable vehicles. This ordinance is administered by the Police Department. Contact them for more information.

Does the town have any regulations regarding unsightly conditions or the storage of junk/debris on my neighbor's property? The Town of Granby has an Ordinance To Define, Prohibit, and Abate Nuisance. The purpose of this ordinance is to protect property values and to promote public health, safety and welfare. If you have a complaint or concern about a specific property please contact the Building Official.

How can I find out if there are any wetlands or flood zones on my property? Officially designated wetlands and flood zones are searchable on the town's Geographic Information System mapping (GIS). This can be found on the town website on the home page or through the Assessor's Office page. If you have trouble finding your property or understanding the information from this mapping system please contact the Building Department to assist you.

Where can I find information about my well or septic system? Since 1976 well and septic systems have been regulated and inspected by the Farmington Valley Health District. They will have information on the location and construction of these systems. They can be researched under the Document Search feature of their webpage (FVHD.ORG). For systems installed prior to 1976 the Building Department may have information. The earliest records in the Building Department's files generally date to about 1960.

Where can I find out if public water is available to my house? Granby has public water supply available in limited areas near Rt. 10. The Salmon Brook Water District covers the center of town and can be reached at 653-3327. The Aquarian Water Company covers some of the southern portion of town near Rt. 10 and can be reached at 651-8906. These are private water companies and are not connected with the Town of Granby in any way.

Where can I find out if public sewers are available at my property? Public sewers are available in a limited area from the center of Granby and continuing south on Rt. 10 to Simsbury. Several side streets also have limited availability. Contact the Building Department and we can verify the availability through our Geographic Information System (GIS).

Do I need a permit to repave my driveway or to create a new driveway? If you plan to construct or repair a driveway on a town street you are required to have a driveway permit. If you were doing the work on a state highway you would obtain this permit from the State Dept. of Transportation. The state office that covers Granby can be reached at

(860) 688-6266. Driveway permits for town roads are obtained from the Building Department, and are reviewed and approved by the Public Works Department. The purpose of the driveway permit is to make sure that the town's road right-of-way and pavement is properly protected and finished. Generally the town's right-of-way extends about 10 ft. from the edge of the paved road. (In some cases it may be more or less than 10 ft.) If you are repaving the portion of the driveway only on private property and not affecting the town right-of-way you would not require a permit. If you are doing driveway work on a private street or right-of-way you do not need a permit. If you have any questions regarding this please contact the Building Department well before you plan to start your project.

Can I build something on a right-of-way on my property? Right-of-ways and easements on property are granted for a number of reasons, but in general allow some entity other than the property owner to access or maintain something on the owner's property. In some cases these may include drainage pipes, other types of utilities, or simply the right to access or cross the property. These rights-of-way are typically recorded in the Town Clerk's office in the deed to the property. This will detail the owner's obligation to the holder of the right-of-way or easement. In most cases it isn't a prudent idea to block or obstruct the right-of-way in any manner. The holder of the right-of-way may require immediate or emergency access to the area which cannot be blocked. In most cases right-of-ways and easements are typically shown on maps or surveys of the property.

How can I find out how many animals I can have on my property? The Granby Zoning Regulations have a very extensive section that deals with animals and other agricultural uses. It can be found at Section 8.15 of the Zoning Regulations which can be found on this web page. Residents are encouraged to read the entire section as it relates to barns and other structures for animals as well as the actual amount of space needed to have animals. If you have any questions regarding animals please contact the Building Department.

Can I have a home-based business? Home occupations are regulated by Section 8.8 of the Zoning Regulations which can be found on this web page.

Do I need a permit to put a shed on my property? A building permit is required for all sheds and accessory structures. In addition to the normal requirements of the Building Code we are concerned with the location of the shed in relation to zoning setbacks, location of wells or septic systems and other utilities. In general, the location of the shed is based on the size proposed. The Building Department and the town's website has a detailed handout which explains the requirements and setbacks for various sized outbuildings. Usually a plot plan or sketch showing the proposed location of the structure will be required as part of the permit application.

How can I find out if I can divide my property or sell a portion of it? Our advice would be to make an appointment to meet with the Director of Community Development or Building Official to look at what you are proposing. It is helpful to be able to look at

maps and our Geographic Information System (GIS) to see if what is proposed is feasible. The lots proposed or as reconfigured must meet the minimum size requirements as described in Section 5 of the Zoning Regulations.

Do I need a building permit to erect a tent or similar temporary structure in my yard? Permits are not required for a) tents used for recreational camping, b) tents less than 350 square feet in total area, c) tents 900 square feet in area which are occupied by less than 50 persons. In many cases larger tents, such as those rented for weddings and similar functions, do require a building permit and are inspected for safety by the Building Official. In some cases the tent rental companies will take out the permit. If you aren't sure if a permit may be required in a specific situation please contact the Building Department to verify if it will be necessary.

Do I need a Certificate of Occupancy for my House? Generally speaking, the State Statutes require a Certificate of Occupancy for any building or portion of a building constructed or substantially altered after 1970. Prior to the adoption of the State Building Code in 1970 the requirements were somewhat haphazard. Few buildings in Granby have Certificates of Occupancy prior to the late 1950's. In modern times we issue Certificates of Occupancy for any new building, additions, substantial renovations, or a change of use from one type of occupancy to a different type as defined by the Building Code.

Can I have an accessory apartment in my house? Accessory apartments are allowed by Special Permit from the Planning and Zoning Commission. The regulations and requirements for accessory apartments are located in Section 8.5 of the Zoning Regulations which are found on this website. If you have questions regarding this please contact the Building Department for more information.

Can I sell my house if I have an underground fuel oil tank? There are no town or state laws that prohibit selling a house that has a working underground fuel tank. Many of the issues dealing with underground tanks are driven by the marketplace and mortgage industry. It is getting progressively more difficult to obtain a mortgage for homes with underground tanks due to the possibility of leaking and environmental damage. Most people today tend to remove the underground tank prior to the sale of the home. The Building Department does require a permit to remove underground tanks and to replace them with new tanks. This will provide independent documentation in the future that the tank or tanks were removed. The Building Department does not keep soil reports or other documentation of contamination.

Where can I find out more information about lead paint? Lead paint was commonly used in many older homes. It can present a serious health risk if not handled properly during remodeling or renovation. Information is available from the Farmington Valley Health District, Connecticut Department of Public Health, and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Where should I have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in my home? New construction standards require smoke detectors on each floor of the home (including the basement), inside each bedroom, and outside the bedrooms in the hallway. Large houses or areas with bedrooms remote from each other may require additional detectors to provide proper protection. All homes with fuel burning heating systems, wood/coal/pellet stoves, and attached garages should have at least one carbon monoxide detector. Many people choose to install combination smoke/carbon monoxide detectors. More important than location is to make sure that all detectors in the home are functional. Experts today recommend replacing all detectors over ten years old due to decreased sensitivity and reliability. If you have specific questions relating to smoke or carbon monoxide detectors the Building Department has a helpful handout and is available to answer any questions.

Do I need a permit for a firepit? The town does not regulate Firepits, fireplaces, and similar structures for cookouts, etc. Residents are encouraged to keep the firepit a safe distance from the house or other structures. State laws state that the firepit may not cause a nuisance to neighboring properties.

Do I need a permit to finish my basement? Yes, a building permit is required to create any finished space in the home. You will be required to provide a simple floor plan showing the proposed finished and unfinished areas of the basement. It is helpful to show the location of the heating system, fuel tank, windows and doors. Generally the Building Official will make a pre-inspection of the basement before the construction begins. In most cases this will only take a few minutes, and in many cases will help identify potential problems or issues that may come up later in the project. If you have any questions as you plan your project please contact the Building Department.